Induction of labour

When labour needs to be started

For most pregnancies, labour starts on its own. For some pregnancies, labour needs help to get started.

'Induction' is when we start or 'induce' labour for you. This is usually done when your doctor or midwife (care provider) feels the risks to you or your baby are greater than the risk of carrying on with the pregnancy.

Induction of labour is generally safe. However, as with any medical procedure or medicine, there are possible risks. Your care provider will explain these to you.

Why would labour be induced?

Times when we consider inducing labour:

- Your pregnancy is 7 days or more past your due date.
- The bag of water around the baby breaks before labour starts.
- Your baby is growing too slowly.
- The fluid around the baby is low.
- You have a medical illness (such as high blood pressure, or diabetes) that might affect you or your baby's health.

How is labour induced?

- **Prostaglandin Gel**
  This medicated gel is put into your vagina. It softens the cervix and helps start contractions. We observe you and your baby for at least 1 hour. You stay in bed for the hour to make sure the gel has time to absorb. You will not be able to eat or drink during this time. Most go home afterwards. Sometimes more than one dose of gel is needed to start labour.
- **Cervidil**
  A tampon with medication is put into your vagina. It softens the cervix and helps start contractions. We observe you and your baby for at least 1 hour after the tampon is put in. You will not be able to eat or drink during this time. Most go home afterwards. It can take several hours before you feel any contractions. If labour does not start, you might need a new tampon put in after 12 to 24 hours.
- **Oxytocin**
  We give this medication into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous (or IV). You stay in the hospital until your baby is born. We check you and your baby often during this time.
- **Breaking the water sac** (rupturing the membranes)
  If your cervix has begun to open, it might help to get labour started if the water sac or membrane around the baby is broken. Your care provider breaks the membrane during a vaginal exam. It will not harm the baby. Once broken, the water might continue to drip out. Labour should start soon afterwards.
- **Foley Catheter**
  We put a small flexible tube called a catheter into your cervix. The tube has a balloon on the end. We fill the balloon with water. We pull the tube tight and tape it to your leg. The pressure from the balloon slowly stretches the cervix. This helps get labour started. You might go home afterwards.

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.
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When will my labour be induced?

Your care provider contacts the hospital to arrange your induction date. Inductions are usually started during the day, but can be started anytime.

How do I prepare for my induction?

Your care provider might tell you what time to come to the hospital the day of your induction. Or we might call you the day of your induction to tell you what time to come to the hospital.

Unless you are told something different:

- Eat breakfast.
- Do your usual daily activities.

If the hospital is very busy, we might have to delay your induction time or date. While waiting for your induction, we might ask you to come to the hospital to be checked or we might ask you to call your care provider.

How is my baby checked during the induction?

We use a machine called a fetal monitor to check your baby's heart beat and your contractions while you are at the hospital. We check to make sure your contractions are not coming too close together or lasting too long.

How long can it take for labour to start?

It can be 1 to 2 days before labour starts. You might have to come back to the hospital more than once.

What can I do at home while waiting for labour to start?

While at home:

- Eat and drink as you normally would. If you have diabetes, follow your diet.
- Rest. This is important. Once you are in labour, you are going to need a lot of energy.
- Go for short walks. Walking in early labour can help labour progress.
- If you have cramping or a backache, a warm shower might help you feel more comfortable.

We give you instructions on when to come back to the hospital.

When should I get help?

Call the hospital or your care provider if you have any of these:

- painful contractions coming regularly such as every 5 minutes
- a leak or gush of fluid from the vagina
- concerns about your baby's movements
- bright red bleeding from the vagina (it is normal to have a small amount of pink or brown bleeding after being examined)
- the Cervidil tampon has fallen out or you have taken it out

Specific to Cervidil – If you have one painful contraction lasting more than 2 minutes:

- Take out the tampon by pulling on the cord hanging out of your vagina.
- Return to the hospital **right away**.

Abbotsford Regional Hospital 604-851-4817	Burnaby Hospital 604-412-6293	Chilliwack General Hospital 604-795-4107	Langley Memorial Hospital 604-514-6034
Ridge Meadows Hospital 604-463-1818	Royal Columbian Hospital 604-520-4587	Surrey Memorial Hospital 604-585-5572	Peace Arch Hospital 604-535-4500 ext. 757273

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